

Grafrica

New Directions For Positive People

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"The Emperor Jones"

"On the Cover"

On this week's issue of Grafica, Paul Robeson is presented in costume for one of his most famous roles—"Emperor Jones" written by Eugene O'Neill and first performed by Robeson on stage in 1925. One of the first black actors to actively strive to create a strong positive black image on screen, many of the roles played by Robeson were stereotyped. However, he brought a sense of dignity, integrity and humanity which transcended these hollow characters. Robeson knew film had the power to bring about better race relations. By contrastingly starring in films which would reach a mass audience, Robeson hoped his characters would "make them (white) realize, even if only unconsciously and for moments, that Negroes are the same kind of people they themselves are; that all this arbitrary separation because of color is unimportant; that we are all hu-

man beings."

One of the most respected performing artists and humanists of his lifetime, Paul Robeson was named All American in 1917 and in 1918 while playing and for Rutgers University. His academic record at Rutgers also earned him Phi Beta Kappa honors in his junior year.

Robeson accepted a law degree from Columbia University in 1923, before launching his professional stage career appearing in such plays as the above-mentioned "Emperor Jones", "Porgy" and "Oliver". In his later years, Robeson became a world-renowned spokesman for the rights of blacks and other oppressed people. He died in 1976.

Special Thanks to Mr. James Brown, Senior Librarian, Newark Public Library, for his assistance in preparing this issue.

PAUL ROBESON

By James Brown

Let the residue of his quiet majesty linger peacefully over all - and sustain us.

Let the memory of his powerful voice echo like thunder across the universe bidding adieu to racism.

Let the telling affirmation of his life be a shining example of exactness which our children can strive to emulate.

Let his unique temper kindle a dying flame among us and bestow in us a will and resolution to fight back until the day be done.

Let his wisdom fill our ranks with unyielding motivation and inspiration.

Let the sum total of his life, like a beacon in the sky guide us, one and all, toward replenished plenitude.

Let future historians write of him in all his grandeur, spiced neither wonder nor heroic dimensions.

Finally, let his life be the yardstick by which our degree of blackness is measured.

Scott Flowers

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Paul Robeson as he appeared in "Proud Valley" the tale of a Welsh coal mining town which befriends a young black stranger. This was the one film in which Robeson was to depict a three-dimensional character, and the role of which he was most proud.

PAUL ROBESON On Stage

This article is reprinted by permission of the Editor, "First World - An International Journal of Black Thought", Volume 2 Number 1, Atlanta, Georgia.

By
**Helene Armstrong
Johnson**

Paul Robeson as performer is one of the ironies of theatrical history. Described in the New York Evening Post in 1943 as "the most imposing personality on Broadway today," the untrained Robeson seemed to confirm the myth that Blacks were natural singers and actors who neither needed training nor sought any. In a London review with Robert Van Gelder, Robeson confessed that "When I set up as an actor, I didn't know how to get from one side of the stage to the other. When I started playing Othello—in London, that is—I was almost as bad." Robeson strode majestically above mere technique, however, for he possessed what have been described as a nobility of mind, a sincerity of spirit, a tranquil dignity, an authoritative strength, and a richness of vocal utterance. When apoplectic, he also had a mordacity intensely sad. In tandem with his talent, such attributes created a sum of magnificence and believability of rare quality. As another London critic assessed him in more emotional language, "Undeniably he plays thrillingly upon the nerves and kidneys at the heart."

Even a brief consideration of Robeson the performer should touch upon the following things: his entrance into and the highlights of the world of entertainment and theater; his atti-

tudes toward his work and himself; Black perceptions of the relationship between his theatrical roles and race; and, finally, the universal man.

Paul Robeson's entry into show business is rather characteristic of Hollywood, even though it did not take place there. It was the apocalyptic chance meeting. According to Lynn Harold Hwang, lead tenor in the Four Hundred Kings of *Shuffle Along* (1921), William Hause, the bass singer, had left the show to go on the Chautauqua circuit for the summer. Worried about a replacement as he walked with his wife along Seventh Avenue, Brownson saw Robeson and his wife coming toward them. When the two couples stopped to talk, the conversation was Browning's problem. Robeson's response to it was, "Why you're talking to a bass singer now," which eliminated the problem. Within a short while, Lew Leslie, Lord Florence Mills, the show-stopping impresa of *Shuffle Along*, arrived from it to stay in his new Plantation Club. With her husband, Robeson, too, came his first taste of success.

Removed *The Voodoo*, the show moved to England, where it opened at the Open House in Blackpool on July 20, 1922, with the ailing Mrs. Patrick Campbell playing the lead. The play was rather unsuccessful and never reached London. Even a brief sketch of the plot leaves little room for wonder. The plantation Blacks believed that the child was bewitched, and suggested that the grandmother have a lull ball prepared by the old wise woman. The scene then shifted to a dugout compound on the Guinea Coast and a dream sequence about the origin of voodoo. Here the sleeping African sees himself as the king and Grandmother Gaylord as the queen. In a macabre ritual, the Africans sacrifice an albino child to the flames. Back on the plantation, when the Blacks threaten to kill Jim because of the appearance of the mate child after its lull ball treatment, the child finds Jim's voice just in time to save Jim. This play by Mary Hoyt Whborg was described as "sentimental, garrulous, and artless." Moreover, in performance, Mrs. Campbell kept improvising, largely by having Robeson sing at the most cut-our moments, especially when

he was asleep.

When Robeson's concert career began to take on the shape of success, he had a little more musical training than he had had dramatic training. It seems to have amounted to the "special interest in singing (his) voice" taken by Miss Vosseller, his high school girl club director, along with his father's "interest on purity of diction," which he mentions in *Here I Stand*. Much later, after Robeson's singing of "Ballad for Americans" on his 43rd birthday, a Cleveland columnist noted that "He has taken singing lessons, but he took them after he was already a concert-stage hero and phonograph idol." Yet on March 10, 1930, The Manchester Program, an English theater advertisement, pushed on its front page that "Manchester is to see and hear Paul Robeson in the flesh..." "Noting that Jutta, Kristina, and Parchemine had already appeared earlier in the season, and that there had been "magnificent expositions" of "The Messiah" and "Elijah," the article anticipated the appearance of Robeson as "perhaps the most interesting event of the season." His songs were described as "the mother-song of mankind, the hidden songs that all men and all women hear whispering in their buried memory." The most important observation was that "It is not only

the dreaming Negro soul that yearns in these conclusive re-births. It is the sad soul of humanity reaching out into the mystery of life and death." What is more, the writer concluded, Robeson had the ability to make his listeners see things as he saw them when he sang.

Such ability lay partly in Robeson's way to say later, in his refusal to do anything he did not understand. As a consequence, he would no longer sing songs of the German, French, or Indians because he did not understand their psychology or philosophy. "Their history has nothing in common with the history of my slave ancestors." Furthermore, American Blacks not to imitate American culture, but to reach backward into their own traditions, Robeson explained that he had come to this idea through music and through his songs. Paul Robeson in the flesh...

Concerts ended, it is to Robe-

On Stage

son as actor that attention must now be paid. When Eugene O'Neill's All God's Chilren Go Forlorn opened at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York on May 15, 1924, Brooklyn critic Arthur Pollock asserted that it had had "eloquence as much publicity as a murder." Why? Because the theme was inter-generational marriage between what Ludwig Lewisohn called "a first rate Negro and third rate white woman" played by Mary Blair. Beginning when the two were children together, the play moves through seven stages of their development. Pollock and Lewisohn saw Robeson as an actor somewhat differently. Pollock said frankly that, "Mr. Robinson to us was a tad disappointing. He is an amateur, hardworking amateur, and nothing more, apparently. During the first act he is merely a big, awkward boy; in the second he loses part of his self consciousness, a very natural self-consciousness under the circumstances, lets himself go and gives a good performance." Pollock's assessment seems to be more in line with Robeson's own "when he set up as an actor."

Lewisohn, on the other hand,

saw Robeson as "a superb actor, extraordinarily sincere and eloquent." Perhaps Lewisohn's most meaningful observation is his approximation of the nearness of his own emotions to those of the ancient Greeks whose dramatic actions also "had their origin in inexpressible myth and ancient terror." Jordan Miller, in *Playwrights' Progress: O'Neill and the Critics*, groups O'Neill's *All God's Chilren* and Robeson's other plays from 1920-1925 as the period of his search for theme and form.

It is within this period that O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* falls. In his New York Times review of November 7, 1923, Alexander Woollcott, although critical of the staging, confessed that the play "move a most potent spell, thanks partly to the admirable playing of Charles S. Gilpin in the title role." It was not until 1925 that Robeson as Brutus Jones became the "Emperor" writing in the English New Statesman (September 19, 1925), John Shand assured his readers that the play was worth seeing mainly "because of Mr. Paul Robeson in the leading

part." Professing nothing but admiration for his performance, Shand was most prophetic when he ventured that, "Mr. Robeson's voice, intelligence, physique, and sense of the stage immediately made me want to see him in Othello."

It was five years, unfortunately, before Shand could see such an Othello. When it opened at the Savoy Theatre on May 19, 1930, Paul Robeson topped everything he had ever done there. London's morning Post left compelled to admit that, "There had been no Othello on our stage for 40 years to compare with him, in dignity, singularity, and true passion." On stage with Robeson were Maxine Brown as Iago, Sybil Thorndike as Emilia, and Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona. Newspaper headline writers were ecstatic: "Robeson acclaimed in Othello Role"; "American Negro's debut in Shakespearean Play Takes London by Storm"; "Audience Rises in Frenzy"; and "Twenty Curtain Calls for Star."

All of this notwithstanding, Robeson revealed to Van Gelder that he was not helped at all by Hannen Swaffer's railing

on the issue of "how the public will take its seeing a Negro make love to a white woman and dress her around the stage. Now probably most people that did not bother a bit—but it sure bothered me. I used like a station hand in the parlor, that's clumsy. But the notices were good, good. I got over it."

When first offered the part in Othello, Robeson refused it. When he accepted, however, he steeped himself in Shakespeare for the next six months. Thus it was that G.W. Bishop was able to cable the New York Times that, "of nobility of mind and rich beauty of utterance, it is difficult to think the part could be better played." Another critic's view was that Robeson achieved dramatic heights, not because he was a man with a black skin, but because he was a great actor. This (unidentified) critic's description of the performance is worth noting:

At first he seemed nervous. When he was speaking he did not seem to know what to do with his arms and hands. His arms hung loosely by his side and sometimes his fingers twitched. But as the tragedy unfolded to its thunderous climax, the actor seemed to grow in power with it. In his speech he was terrific; in his remorse, most noble. In deep woe at Iago's almost too controlled, made the beautiful measured poetry sounded like the music that it is. One heard every syllable he uttered—a rare treat today. When he stood on the stage, beethovenian, towering over everyone, he reminded one of pictures of Golath in the old forests of Biblical times.

Such was the measure of a man who could see himself in the image of a plantation hand in the parlor. Whatever the measure in London, it was to be 13 years before New York could take its own. Meanwhile, Robeson appeared in concert, toured the variety circuit, and made a number of British films about Africa. Although these are not part of this treatment of Robeson's career, it is important to be aware of their purpose as he idealized it. Thomas Cripps, in *Slow Fade to Black*, says that Robeson envisioned a chance to show Black men living out their lives, led by a great Black leader "not between the races." Most scenes supporting such idealism ended on the cutting room floor; subsequently, Robeson was enlisted for making films which upheld British imperialism, films which he came to hate. It was not all hindsight though. As a case in point, Ning Mee McKinstry's husband, Melvin Woodfolk, was in South Africa during the filming of *Sanderson of the River* and recounted for this writer the angry fight which Robeson had with the di-

nector. It is enough to repeat Cripps' "Poor Robeson."

The next milestone was reached back in New York when, as Joe, Robeson sang "Of Men and Rivers" in Ziegfeld's 1932 production of *Shes-Hot*, starring Irene Dunne and Dennis King. He was Joe again in the London production of 1934. Once again, however, Robeson was playing a minor role that had been created by another actor, John Bleddin, in the original production of 1927.

It was not until 1943 that American theatergoers could take their measure of Robeson as Othello, even though an announcement that he would appear on Broadway was made as early as 1939. Margaret Webster, the director, as quoted in Marie Seton's *Paul Robeson*, explained her timidity: "I believed that a production of the play with him in it could be a landmark in the American theater and in the history of American social consciousness. It took us all these years to prove ourselves right." After failing to secure booking, Robeson and Webster held their own performances in Cambridge and Princeton. Under Theater Guild sponsorship, additional try-outs were held in New Haven and Boston. When Othello finally opened at the Shubert Theatre on October 19, 1943, José Ferrer was Iago, Uta Hagen Desdemona, Margaret Webster Emilia, and James Morris was Cassio.

In February of the following year, The American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Robeson its medal for Good Direction on the Stage. Only nine others had been so honored. The medal carried with it an intensively heightened private meaning for Robeson. His father's training in and insistence upon purity of diction, The father's influence was so pervasive that, as Benjamin Robeson saw his brother, he was actually "the personification of his father with his own personality added."

Far more intriguing at this point than the already familiar critical judgments are the Black perceptions of the relationship between Robeson, theatrical roles and their own race consciousness.

As Shakespearean scholar Thomas Marc Parrott observed, that which drew Othello was not merely sexual jealousy but the passion for the loss of an ideal, which is far nobler. In Act IV, Scene 1, Iago taunts Othello with sexual images of Desdemona's supposed infidelity to the point where Othello begins to tremble: "It is not words that shake me thus." Then, as Shakespeare directs, the actor falls in a trance. After seeing Robeson writhing on the floor, one of his friends thought him quite graceless: "Paul, quit falling on the floor in

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON RE-DISCOVERED

PART II OF III PARTS

Our Greatest Asset

Booker T. Washington spoke in his Atlanta Exposition Address, of his deep concern for black education. He expressed the view that the nation's greatest asset and security is to be found in the most extensive education of the mind. He called upon his overwhelmingly white southern audience to encourage black education as paying potentially the highest dividends imaginable.

Dr. Washington stated:

"There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most valuable intelligent citizen. No effort or means of interest will pay a thousand percent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—boosting him and giving him that takes."

"There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable—"

The laws of changeless justice bind
Oppression with oppression;
And close as sin and suffering joined
We much to far astray.

"Nearly sixteen million of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, as they will poll against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or shall prove a veritable body of death..."

Washington's concept of education involved the development of motives of determination and then of a sense of discipline in one's mind and in one's work. It placed a high priority upon excellence. Role models were essential. But most important, in his view of education, was the spirit of dedication and concern on the part of those who teach. Further, education should prepare the mind while it develops the body, by training one's hands for productive labor. Indeed, the learning of head and hand should relate so much other. Added to this must be the heart. The Bible, with its moral lessons, and its exaltation of service along with its incomparable literary worth—was seen as crucial for the development of a fully educated man or woman. Cleanliness, good manners and common sense must be included, too.



With all of these elements in mind, Booker T. Washington was about shaping the curriculum at Tuskegee. He encouraged Tuskegee's graduates and other leaders in industry and schools elsewhere to keep all of these ingredients as a part of the educational process.

Concerning his own childhood experience, Washington relates: "Often I would have to walk several miles at night in order to recite my night-school lessons. There was never a time in my youth, no matter how dark and discouraging the days might be, when one resolve did not continually remain with me, and that was a determination to secure an education at any cost."

Overcoming Disabilities

Concerning the need for compensatory treatment in the overcoming of handicaps, Washington would hold the view that one's personal self-esteem and one's sense of education's value in relation to one's personal and racial hopes were all-important. Two remarkable reflections are shared with us in this regard. The first tells of Washington's experience with teaching himself the alphabet. He states:

"From the time that I can remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall

that I had an intense longing to read. I determined, when quite a small child, that, if I accomplished nothing else in life, I would in some way get enough education to enable me to read common books and newspapers. Soon after I got interested in some books in our new cabin in West Virginia, I induced my mother to get her a book for me. Now or where she got it I do not know, but in some way she procured an old copy of Webster's 'blueback' spelling-book, which contained the alphabet, followed by such meaningless words as ab, ba, ca, da. I began at once to devour this book, and I think that it was the first one I ever held in my hands."

"I had learned from somebody that the way to begin to read was to learn the alphabet, so I tried on all the ways I could think of to learn it—all of course without a teacher, for I could find no one to teach me. At that time there was not a single member of my race anywhere near us who could read, and I was too timid to approach any of the white people. In some way, within a few weeks, I mastered the greater portion of the alphabet.

"In all my efforts to learn to read my mother shared fully in my ambition, and sympathized with me and aided me in every way that she could. Though she was totally ignorant, so far as more book knowledge was concerned, she had high ambitions for

her children, and a large fund of good, hard common sense which seemed to enable her to meet and master every situation. If I have done anything in life worth attention, I feel sure that I inherited the disposition from my mother."

The second reflection concerning the overcoming of disabilities from the past is marked by a rare sense of both human worth and racial pride. Excellence, he emphasizes, comes not from outer supports but from inner feelings and personal drive. Washington writes:

"I consider that I do not envy the white boys as I once did. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Looking at from this standpoint, I almost reach the conclusion that often the Negro boy's birth and connection with an unpopular race is an advantage, so far as real life is concerned."

"With few exceptions, the Negro youth grows up harder and more resourceful, his task even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition. But out of the hard and unusual struggle which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that often misses whose passage is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race."

"From any point of view, I had rather be what I am, a member of my negro race, than to be a slave, or a member of any other race. I have always been made sad when I have heard memories of any race claiming rights and privileges, or certain badges of distinction, on the ground that they were members of this or that race, regardless of their own individual worth or attainments."

"I have been made to feel sad for such persons because I am conscious of the fact that mere connection with what is known as a superior race will not permanently carry an individual forward so long as he has individual worth, and mere connection with what is regarded as an inferior race will not finally sustain an individual tact, if he possesses intrinsic, individual merit. Every persecuted individual and race should get much compensation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that *none*, no matter under what skin found, is in the long run, recognized and rewarded."

(To Be Continued)

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Warith Deen Muhammad To Address Educational Benefit

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, Leader; American Muslim Mission and probably one of the most renowned and controversial leaders for human rights and social justice to arrive on the American scene in the last decade, will address a special Educational Benefit

to be held in New York City's Cooperative Auditorium, 551 Grand Street, at 9 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 1981. The Banquet, which will be presented by the Education Department of Masjid Malcolm Shabazz, Northeast Regional Headquarters of the American

Muslim Mission, is being held for the benefit of the New York City branch of the highly esteemed Sister Clara Muhammad Elementary Secondary School (Nationally) established there are 43 such active schools throughout the country. Imam Warith Deen Muhammad first made headlines in 1975 when he took over the leadership of the Muslim Organization Believers at that time as the Nation of Islam following the death of his father, the former leader, Elijah Muhammad. A much sought after speaker both here in America

and abroad as a result of his ongoing pro-human rights efforts towards achieving a better society for all people, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad will offer his comments on one of America's most pressing concepts—Quali-ty Education. He is also the author of the most popular new book entitled, "An' The Light Shines In The East". If you have never had the opportunity to hear this dynamic speaker then you will not want to miss this special event. One thing is certain—when Imam Warith Deen Muhammad speaks, people do indeed listen. Cecile Hu-

date on your calendar now—Friday, April 17, 1981, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., Cooperative Auditorium, 551 Grand Street, New York City. Tickets, which include dinner and live entertainment, are \$35.00 each for all attendees. For further information contact: Education Department, Masjid Malcolm Shabazz, 102 West 116th Street, New York, N.Y. 10026 (212) 565-6506 or 662-2200.

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The Art of Amos

Rich and earthy textures predominate the work of artist Emma Amos, whose collective work includes drawings, etchings and weavings.

Gilbert Cooke, an art critic and columnist said, "Emma Amos' hand-woven canvases, like her drawings and prints, present an endless wealth of possibilities. She endows her work with the individual biography, the successive passing through of various phases of life that provide a meaning and a feeling that makes the whole subjectively pleasurable."

In a more graphic description of her work Ms. Amos said, "As for style, combining abstraction with figure drawing, weaving with painting and collage is what makes going to my studio exciting and faintly dangerous. Now I'm warping my looms to weave 'Rags,' painted floating canvases. From papermaking, it's an easy jump to felt-making so I can weave, color, sew and glaze chunks of gauk."

Referring to the attention of her work, in part to black women, she said, "And I'll keep do-

ing unknown, as well as established artists minority artists. The gallery's primary concern is the presentation of the accomplishments of such artists, and their work of contemporary and historic importance to the public."

Admission to the gallery is free. Exhibition hours are from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., Monday through Friday.

ing the etched women who stare out from their plates and pressed paper. I love their attitude. They are my solid ground."

Ms. Amos has participated in many selected group exhibitions including "Artists Who Make Prints," Federal Plaza, New York, N.Y., 1980; "Black Artists' South," Huntsville Museum, Huntsville, Al., 1979; and "Afro-American Arts," Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Ma.

In addition, her work is dis-



EMMA AMOS, artist. "Paper and Linen"

Atlanta, Ga., and the United States Embassy, London, Eng- land.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Ga., Ms. Amos received her Bachelor of Art from Antioch College in 1958 and her Master of Art from New York University in 1966. Earlier in 1960, she

was awarded a diploma in etching from the London Central School of Art.

In 1977-78 she was the well-known star of "Show of Hands," a 13-week "How-to" craft series produced by WGBH Educational TV in Boston, Ma. Currently, she is an Assistant Pro-

fessor of Art at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

Her most recent exhibit ap-



DREAM GIRL, 1978



MAN OH MAN, 1980



(Above) Paul Robeson singing at Peekskill concert (1949). Around the artist are war vets and communist goers who acted as bodyguard for Robeson.
(Center) Paul Robeson with the Editors of *Freedomways* at "Welcome Home" birthday tribute, (April, 1965) in New York. (Left to right) J.H. O'Dell, Eslanda Robeson, John Henrik Clarke, Paul Robeson, Norma Rogers, Esther Jackson.
(Below) With coeds at Bennett College, in Greensboro, N.C. in the early 1940's.



(Above left) Paul Robeson with Lena Horne.

(Above right) Paul Robeson visiting with world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis at Louis' training camp.

(Below) Paul Robeson at the Southern Negro Youth Congress Convention at Tuskegee Institute, 1942. This was Robeson's first major concert in the deep South and to the first non-segregated audience in this area. With him are Tuskegee students and Esther Jackson, now Managing Editor of *Freedomways*.

STATE, FEDERAL CUTS IN FUNDS PERIL TO SCHOOLS, NJEA WARNS

State and federal funding cut backs in aid to education will mean that public schools are in for tough sledding financially unless teachers and other school employees do something about it. Essex County teachers were told March 25, at the Patriotic Cafeteria, Livingston, N.J.

Speaking at the annual Essex County Legislative dinner, New Jersey Education Assn. Executive Director James P. Conner said the combination of federal and state education aid cuts will result in reduced opportunities for the State's children, especially those with special needs.

"When Secretary of Education Terrel Bell announces the federal bilingual program and resources tag support for tuition tax credits for the parents of private school students, it becomes clear that we cannot look to the federal government to help the public schools," Conner said. "They are being regarded as a place of last resort for someone else's child care. This abdication of responsibility and financial support by the federal government will throw an even heavier burden on New Jersey's life resources, both state and local, and should result [in] federal issues the principal focus of the 1981 New Jersey election."

Conner said the gathering that Essex County will be hard hit in minimum school aid, transportation and other forms of State funding. The NJEA leader pointed out that if Gov. Brendan Byrne's plan to abolish minimum aid is allowed to stand by the Legislature, Essex stands to lose \$4,413,362 in State dollars for education.

"That's quite a chunk to lose for any county," Conner declared. "Some districts will lose heavily."

"This huge cut can mean only one of two things: either the district will increase property taxes by huge amounts to make up for the lost State revenue, or they will make large-scale program and staff cutbacks. That is not our understanding of 'thorough and efficient education,'" Conner said, referring to the popular name of the State's education law.

To counteract the growing trend toward school aid cut backs, Conner urged the teachers and school workers assembled to become more ac-

tive politically.

"How many of the fine friends of education who already sit as senators and assemblypersons in the current legislature will occupy those same seats in 1982? How many of those who are not concerned about public education will still be here or will be replaced by persons who

are concerned? Will the new governor be concerned about public education, about opportunities for children? Will the new governor take a long-range view and see how current legislative action will affect us 20 years hence in our industries, our homes, our service areas, our job market, our

water and energy supply?"

Comments and many messages from the audience were basically saying "I did in '81," mean-

ing that NJEA is attempting to elect 120 legislators and a governor friendly to public education.

Universal Sounds

April Eugene

The comeback of Sly Stone is in the works. He's teaming up with George Clinton... "Body Music" by Styxers and "Let's Do It" are perfect 10's for the party scene...

Philadelphia International artists in studio: Patti LaBelle in studio with Dexter Wansel and Gamble and Huff; Gamble also producing Teddy Pendergrass. Teddy's jeans should be in the store soon; Jessi Cane is in the studio with Norman Connors. I

hear she's doing a version of "Love Don't Love Nobody" that will put the Spinners in a spin...

New from Atlantic/Cofflon: Stacy Lattisaw in studio with Narada Michael Walden. This will be her third album on the Cofflon label. Chir is in the studio with Deborah Harry (Blondie). They just finished production on Johnny Mathis' forthcoming album.

Hat tunes this week: "When Love Calls"—Atlantic Starr.

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Spotlight on Theatre in New Brunswick

By Edward Lloyd Fleming

Crossroads Theater located at 320 Monroe Parkway in New Brunswick is currently presenting "Medal of Honor Rag" which is, in my opinion, a gripping drama depicting the devastating effects of the war in Viet Nam on the psyche and family life of those courageous men who survived the atrocities.

The picture is drawn through the true life story of one veteran who chose a particular career after returning from Vietnam. Scott gives an outstanding performance in depicting Mr. Rick's son's magically brief life. The action of the hour long play alternates past participants in a race at the Valley Kings Arms, Hockipack Inn, Springfield, Mass., and present day scenes. Proscenium's setting design encompasses an atmosphere more than adequate for a theatrical production. And in the visual arena, features of the springtime, clean, sparsely furnished room is the jazz and white chessboard-like presentation of the boardroom game which seemingly strives to keep ensuing mind game that it is to leave place upon it. There is a large clock above the office entrance set at 2 p.m. As the timeworn bags of Rick arrive, the minis in his may hectic session, the image of the congressional. Meets of honor appear on one of the room's pastille screens. A convening briefly foreseen while proclaims it a family, reinforced by Danny Speer's entry and begins to pursue through a case file which he has removed from his briefcase. At the point Dear Jackson, the hon. A Congression in Medo, an older, non-patient wearing that plaid shirt under a red and blue robe is escorted into the office by Mr. M. Fred Hammann, the compelling director. Nowhere we come face to face with the grim realities of war or even assassination, existence. As nothing in the doctor's report from a severe case on "Impudent girl".

For Dan Speer knows the tragic character events began less than a year before return from the war. He has been hospitalized twice due to a fall which after an hour when the victim came was sheared in the amputee back for 10% to 20% of his torso, arms, head and legs were not able. He went to the armchair, paraffin bath, etc., for 10 days. In their 10 days, he had to walk on his one leg, but it supported him gauchedly, in a fit of rage with glass blunting, Dale Jackson killed between 10 to 20 enemy soldiers. Ten days after the incident he was given a medical

discharge and sent home to his native Detroit where he would spend a great deal of time lying in bed sipping at the ceiling. He turned to sunbathing on a roofed-in balcony, the shadow players, strong as Vietnamese who sent him. Mr. Jackson would find himself helping his fellow fugitives to one by another after another. This time it's with a New York police officer who has come to examine the "unusual circumstances" surrounding Jackson's illness.

Dan Coles' intensely vivid narrative account reveals Dan Jackson's life as the nightmare of Vietnam which ends with death in a grocery store which is literally aaged under the direction of Rick Abdo. Media of "Honor Rag" with its axes twinged is worth the price and fitting designer, Daniel Stratman, will play Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 1 p.m. and April 2. For further information call 201-932-9890.

"The Secret Place" written by Garner Morris, one of the original Not Ready-For-Prime-Time Players on NBC's "Saturday Night Live," is having a limited run at the Lerner on the State University's Douglass College Campus, George Street, New Brunswick. The final performance takes place Sunday, April 5, at 8 p.m. Comedically directed by Avery Brooks, Mexican protestor at a theater arts at Rutgers University, "The Secret Place" is a searing drama depicting the collision course of a black policeman and a group of black revolutionaries.

Once the audience has assembled in the lobby, they are ushered into an area of the theater where they remain standing silently for approximately 10 minutes. During this time they view slides and other images of the riots and tell's the period in which the play is set. Such scenes as the race riots, assassinations, the Black Power as well as political hostilities and other incidents that were highlighted by their revolutionary fervor flash before one's eyes. From there the audience is led into another room where the seated performers in stage costumes. A's audience is in a room and Harris strikingly fluid set design (created in partial fulfillment of her Master of Fine Arts Degree) comes into view. Composed of multi levels and

suspended steel grids and open on all four sides to the audience, it also serves as the "play box" screen for the movie, "Alexander Payne" which already appears in a large on-screen projection mode. Alexander Payne, John Travolta and others, "Medal of Honor Rag" is a hardy, determined policeman whose dedication to his job supersedes his family life. The conflicts and pressures within him reach a peak when he is assigned to infiltrate a black revolutionary group planning a bank heist. Aside from being a negligent husband with a very understanding wife, it is added, "We're prone to father whose daughter is an actress" who with evolutions and becoming pregnant by one of their many wanted leaders, Wilhelmina Rochester and Allison Elkerenhoetter, make multiple performances if the respects are met. Other highlights of the moment can include Raymond C. Brown, Marvin Jefferson, Ron Johnson, Shellye Lee, Gail Ann Joseph A. Mazzoni, and sponsored throughout the production are some harmonious vocal accompaniments by James Wynn, Syd, Malone, and Avery Brooks. Costumes were designed by Vicki McLaughlin and Rutgers faculty members and lighting designed by David Marshall, a graduate student at the university. If interested in attending the April 5th performance contact the theater box office 201-932-9892.



Pictured left to right: Lee Richardson and Denny Speer in "Medal of Honor Rag".



Pictured left to right: Matthew Bernard Johnson, Alison Elkerenhoetter, and Wilhelmina Rochester in "The Secret Place".

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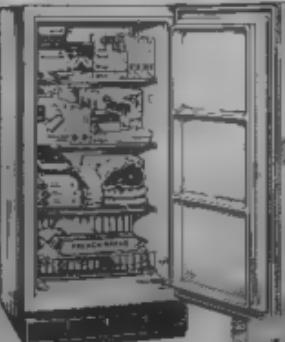
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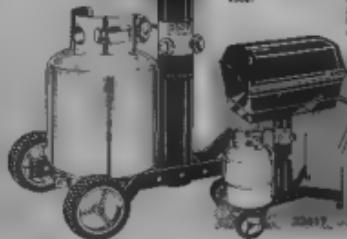
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"Youthening, the Art and Science of Staying Young"

To those who believe they will never grow old "Youthening, the Art and Science of Staying Young" will be the top it discussed at the Nu-Age Center of Harlem's third monthly Sunday Brunch, April 12th from 12 noon-3 p.m. The lecture will be offered by Rev Donald Thomas, gerontologist, author of *Philosophy of Divine Nutrition* (PDR) and *Guinness Book of World Records* holder. He will explain a Holistic Health and Mental Arts system that combines spirituality with a pragmatic contemporary way of living.

Mr. Thomas, a N.Y. State special education teacher in biology and physical fitness, attended City College of N.Y., graduated from U.C.L.A. and is presently a specialist at the Brooklyn Health Science Division of Medicine. Even College Course in Social Gerontology under an Administration on Aging grant (IV-A), Nu-Age, a non-profit cultural, educational and healing Center dedicated to spiritual upliftment of the Community, is located on the first floor of a brownstone at 354 W. 122nd St. between Manhattan and Morningside Avenues.

Museum Lecture Series Addresses Tibetan Art

"Form and Content in Tibetan Art," an in-depth analysis of three aspects of Buddhist art in Tibet, will be offered at the Newark Museum on Wednesdays, April 8, 15 and 22, at 10:30 a.m.

The lecture series has been arranged by Valerie Reynolds, Curator of Oriental Art, in association with the Museum exhibition "TIBET: A Lost World." All of the Wednesday morning talks will include color slide presentations encompassing Tibetan painting, sculpture and ritual objects from collections in Asia, Europe and America.

On April 8, "The Iconography of Meditation" will be discussed by John Murdoch Reynolds, an Instructor at the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, Amherst, and holder of degrees in the Kagyuupa and Nyungnima schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Raoul Birnbaum will examine "Unique and Borrowed Elements in the Buddhist Arts of Tibet" on April 15. Mr. Birnbaum is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at Columbia University and an Assistant Professor of Chinese Studies at Hunter College. He is also author of "The Healing Buddha," published in 1979 by Shambala Press.

The series concludes on April 22 with a talk about "The Tibetan Wheel of Life" by Jacqueline Miller-Dunington. Currently a Ph.D. candidate in Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, Ms. Miller-Dunington is also interim curator of the Jacques Marchais Tibetan Center and author of the books "Arhatship" and "Bosat and Lohan."

Series reservations will be accepted in order of receipt with payment. The fee is \$15 for

Museum members and \$20 for non-members. A limited number of tickets to individual lectures (\$6 and \$7, respectively) may be available. For information, call (201) 733-6600.

The Newark Museum is lo-

cated at 49 Washington Street in downtown Newark. Convenient parking is available in the adjacent Park Past Lot located at the corner of University and Central Avenues.

that fit." He explained that Othello was a man of too much dignity to go rolling around on the floor. "Pump in a chair, Paul, and keep some dignity."

Much later, in 1940, speaking as Chairman of the Council on African Affairs, Robeson shared the advice he had been given by some very serious Blacks:

You do most for us...by perfecting your art and thus proving to the world the Negro, too, is capable of being a serious artist, just sing and let your mouth shout when you're finished. And for heaven's sake, stop singing spirituals. They remind everybody we used to be slaves. And stop talking about Africa. People will think we're related to those dreadful savages over there. Haven't we troubles enough of our own, right here?

Robeson clearly had enough of them. There is little wonder that he needed a larger world.

In his biography of the actor, Selvin was convinced that "The more he had studied Africa, the more strongly he felt that he was essentially African." In an even larger sense, though, Robeson belonged to the world in a way which Alexander Woollcott describes expansively as he talks about Robeson's greatness. "Paul Robeson strikes me as having been made out of the original stuff of the world. In

look at current exhibits, and to attend one or more of the events scheduled for the following date.

Thursday, April 9, 3:30 p.m.
"Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde":
A Film for Young Adults
and Adults

An Evening of Poetry with
Vincent Edward Cuban Poet, in Spanish. Heriberto Padilla will comment on
the poems.

Saturday, April 11, 9:00 p.m.
"Fashion, Careers and Design": Speakers Paul Hollieatt, Director of Admissions, Tobe Coburn School of Fashion Careers and James C. Johnson, Director of Admissions, The Fashion Institute of Technology.

Special Exhibit: "International Costume and History Folk Dress."

Current Exhibits:
"Mythical Animals and
Fantastical Creatures";
"Laughing With Animals";
"The Artist and The Book".

On Stage

He seems to be caught with Africa and the reduced trees of California. He is a fresh nut, a fresh gesture, a fresh effort of creation. I am proud of belonging to this race. For, of course, we both are members of the one—sometimes falsoomly described as human." Shaped by the terrors of his own experience and linked by ties to people the world over, Robeson developed a unique sense of belonging to the human race.

In retrospect, Robeson's dramatic roles seem to have been linked randomly by theme: the Black leader—usually tribal—and a white love interest. This was certainly true of the beginning and the end: *Tobago* and *Othello*. Although Robeson seemed to confirm the myth that Blacks are natural home actors, he rose majestically above both myth and technique. On stage, with great personal dignity and a keenly sensed sincerity of spirit, he made people "hear the whisperings in their buried memories." Moreover, he undeniably played "thrillingly upon the nerves and knocked at the hearts of people everywhere." Whenever Paul Robeson stood before a mirror, he saw the universal man in whom he believed so deeply—HELEN ARMISTEAD JOHNSON

Helen Armstrong Johnson is founder and curator of the Armstrong Johnson Archives.



The ferocious face of the divine goddess, "Vajrasattva," is adorned with a skull crown and "Wheel of the Law" earrings. (Solid cast silver, gilded and painted details with turquoise stones; 17th-18th century).

National Library Week

The Newark Public Library will celebrate National Library Week April 6-13 in a very special way. Colorful poster will be distributed free to all visitors to the Main Library and the Branches during the week. The posters, measuring 31" x 41", are in color and graphically going with pictures and print the resources, services and programs of the Library, as well as the procedure for obtaining a borrower's card. The prints are in English and Spanish.

The posters will be available not only for individuals but also for Agencies, Community Centers, Churches, and those organizations serving the elderly-speaking community. The cost of mailing is prohibited; therefore, we invite representatives of agencies and organizations to visit the Library and pick up a poster for display on bulletin boards.

The public is invited to visit the Library during National Library Week to register and obtain a borrower's card to take out books and other materials (call 733-7741 for your library).

"What's Going On..."

FORUM

The Black Heritage Day Parade Committee, in association with Rubin Johnson and Club Paradise will present an informative forum designed to focus public attention on the loss of young youth from Newark and the many, slain children in Atlanta. The discussion will include innovative methods to prevent future child abductions. Guest speakers will include: Ralgha Muhammad, Director, Crisis Coalition; Ms. Carolyn Cooper, East Orange Director of Homeless Services; Ms. Betty Austin of the Neo-Futurists group; Mr. James Williams of the Leadership Development Group. In addition, parents and relatives of the two Newark youth, and a parent representing families in Atlanta will attend. All proceeds will go towards investigation and ultimate arrest of person or persons responsible for these tragic acts. Sunday, April 12, Club Paradise, 998 Broad Street, Newark, N.J. 07105. Donation \$5.00. Information Call: Black Heritage Day Parade Committee (201) 623-1594 or Club Paradise (201) 643-7327.

Reading Program

Newark Project Read will sponsor a reading program, Directed by Ms. Carolyn Holmes Bishop, designed to provide participants with necessary tools to tutor students in grades 1-7 in basic reading skills. Those completing the course will receive national certification enabling them to seek a paying job at a later date (the program does not provide this service). Location: 969 McCarter Hwy. The dates of the classes are as follows: April 23, 24, 30 and May 1, 6 p.m., 8:30 p.m. Registration fee is \$3.00. Information contact: Newark Project Read (9 a.m.- 4 p.m.) (201) 623-9225.

Self Defense Workshop

On Monday evening, April 6, from 8:10 p.m., the Nu Age Council of Newark presents a lecture/workshop on "Psychic Self Defense". Ms. Ayo Adio, a psycho-educational health therapist, will talk about the existence of psychic attacks, methods of defense against them, and how one can use psychology to discover and utilize your inner strengths. Admission is free. Call (212) 964-4233 ext. 174 for further information.

information. The NuAge Council is a non-profit, cultural educational center dedicated to spiritual unfoldment. The Council is located at 354 West 123 Street, N.Y.

Reception For Author

First Coast Communications, Inc., invites you to a Benefit and Reception for Bermudian author, Dennis Rahim Wallace, author of his soon to be published book, "The Things We Do To Each Other". The event which also features local poets and artists, will be held in the Harbin State Office Building, 2nd Floor Art Gallery, Sunday, April 5, 6-9 p.m. Wallace is a member of the Frederick Douglass and Berlin Writers Workshops in New York. He has performed in the U.S.A. with "Festivestential Unlimted" and locally with "We Are People Too". His work has appeared in a number of literary, poetry and cultural journals, and he is author of "Words for Lowen, Friends and Enemies" and "Survived in the 80's".

Theatre

A new drama by Allison West entitled "The Cat Walk" plays thru April 12 at the New Heritage Repertory Theatre, 43 East 125th Street (at Madison Avenue). Directed by Roger Furman and featuring members of the Repertory Company, the donation is \$5.00. Call (212) 876-3272 for reservations (special Friday night discounts for students, senior citizens and out-of-town actors).

Conferences

The Upper Manhattan Reading Council will hold a two-day reading conference on April 10 and 11 at the City College Shepard Hall, Convent Ave. at 140th Street. The conference is co-sponsored by The City College Department of Elementary Education, the Office of Bilingual Education, and The Uptown Chamber of Commerce. On Friday, April 10, the confab will run from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., and on Sat., April 11 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration fee is \$10 for the general public and \$5 for Upper Manhattan Reading Council members and students with ID.

The African Heritage Studies Association will host their 13th Annual Conference, April 16-18, 1981 in Baltimore, Maryland. Theme: The Many

Faces of Imperialism: Challenge of 80's, held jointly with The National Conference of Black Political Science's 11th Annual Conference. Theme: The Crisis of Black Leadership: National and International Dimensions.

The invited keynote speaker, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Featured speakers include John Henry Clarke, Sonia Sanchez, Barbara Stowers, James Turner, Yusef Ben-Jochannan and Ronald Walters.

For conference information contact Black Studies Department, 115 Hams Inn College of N.Y.V., 100-1001, (212) 690-8117 or Shelly Lewis, Political Science Department, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia 30314.

Concerts

In celebration of "Jazz Week" in Newark, N.J., Rutgers University Livingston presents tenor saxophonist, Harold Ashby in concert. Ashby's chief influences were Ben Webster and Charlie Parker. In 1963, he took over Webster's tenor chair in the Ellington orchestra, remaining one of its leading solo voices until Ellington's death in 1974. Ashby will appear April 7, 8 p.m. at the Lucy Stone Hall Auditorium. Admission is free.

Art Exhibit

For the past ten years, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Center for Art and Culture has served as host, mentor and provided exhibition space for hundreds of this city's most talented artists. In keeping with this tradition, the Center is extremely proud to present its latest offering, "Trans Images".

This exhibit will feature the work of Carlos Suenos, Bill Smith, Alan Reddick, Kirk Robinson and Mark Richardson. At the opening reception, the Center would also like to introduce to the public its new office located at 1368 Fulton Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11216.

The reception for the artists, their guest and the general public, will be held Wednesday, April 15, 1981, from 5-8 P.M. at the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Center for Art and Culture at the same address as above. The admission is free. For additional information, please contact Mr. Che Baraka at 635-3300.

Theatre Workshops

The National Black Theatre located in central Harlem at 9 East 125th Street will be offering the Joy of Performing Workshops beginning April 1. The workshop will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 pm- 10 pm through April 23.

The Joy of Performance is a survey course designed to give

its participants the opportunity to discover the tools needed to present themselves positively in the world. This series will include Barbara Christopher, an extremely talented singer and vocal coach, who will work with the participants on vocal technique.

Participants for her session on April 8th should bring sheet music of a song they know well and be prepared to sing it to the group.

The series will also include Don Zinne, playwright and author of "One Monkey Don't Stop Show", now playing at Brooklyn's Billie Holiday Theater, who will work with the participants in the area of playwriting. Participants in his session on April 15th should bring samples of their work.

The Joy Of Performing is an informative and exciting experience for people who are serious about putting their talents out to the world. For further information call Shirley Faison at 427-5615.

The Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop announces their

third Writers' Directors' Studio Project, opening at the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop's own space, 3175 West 125th Street, 3rd floor, on Thursday, March 26, at 8 p.m.

Bessie Smith — An Historical Fantasy, written by Philadelphia playwright Ed Shockey, mirrors the great blues singer backstage, fighting to overcome her obstacles and conflicts before she has to face her fans and the world. This 12-character piece is being directed by Charles Turner. The project will continue three weeks, March 26, 27, 28, 29, April 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Door donation is \$3.50/TDF Voucher.

The Workshop's Winter development program is supported by The NEA, MYSCA, Rockefeller Foundation, Jerome Foundation and by private donations.

For Inclusion in "What's Going On," forward correspondence, to Editor, Grafrica, 28 Emerson Street, East Orange, N.J. 07018

Playwrights contest announced

The American Folk Theater today announced a competition of new American plays for showcase presentation to the New York community. The contest is being held to encourage new playwrights and to provide New Yorkers with innovative first-quality theater.

A panel of experienced directors and producers will select five manuscripts for staged readings at the American Folk Theater from which the winning play for showcase presentation will be chosen. Members of the selection panel include John A. Baker, associate director of American Folk Theater, Marvin Felix Canfield, producer, "The Family"; Leslie Lee, Tony nominee for "The First Breath of Summer"; and Ish Shaffter, artistic director, Symphony Space.

Manuscripts are eligible for consideration if they have never been produced in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut, and if they can be staged with no more than 15 performers including dancers and musicians. Entries must include a one paragraph summary of the plot and a one paragraph description of the theme, cast of

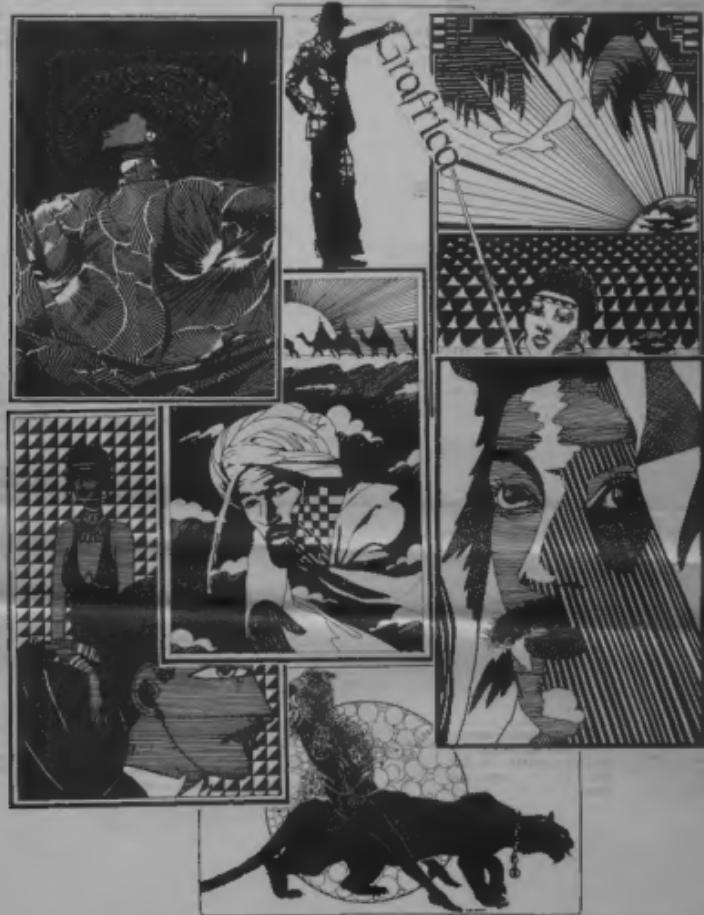
characters and minimal set requirements. All manuscripts must be typed and no more than 120 pages double spaced.

One-act plays or musicals will be accepted only from authors and composers 16 years of age or younger.

All manuscripts must be submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Americans Folk Theater, 214 West 97th Street, New York, New York 10025, no later than March 31, 1981. For more information about the competition, call Dick Gelfeld, artistic director of American Folk Theater at (212) 777-1900.

The American Folk Theater is a multi-racial theater on Manhattan's upper west side. Its programs include a Children's Theater Workshop, staged readings of new works by American playwrights, and a summer season. This year's season, scheduled to begin in April, includes "Twelve Angry Men"; "A Streetcar Named Desire"; "Paisley Green" and "Richard Wright's 'Native Son'"; the classic American melodrama, "The Drunkard"; and "De la Beignete" by Oscar Brown, Jr.

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